THE

HERALD OF TRUTH.

And HE that sat upon the throne said, BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW." Rev. xxi, 5.

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FOR THE HERALD OF TRUTH.

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Mr. Editor.

Should the following summary view of the origin and progress of conjugial love be deemed worthy a place in your useful work, it is at your service. A SUBSCRIBER.

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That there is one God, even our *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is essential *love and wisdom.*

That from *Him* there perpetually proceeds the influx of *goodness* and *truth* into every human mind. That the quantity and degree of this influx, is altogether in proportion to the *quality* of the recipient subject.

That this subject can only become a full and proper recipient, by looking to the *Lord through the love of uses.* That hence proceed the divine spheres of innocence and peace. Also, the divine sphere of *conjugial love*, which is the most *universal* of all.

That the *end* of this sphere, as regarding the *highest use*, is the consummation of the created universe, especially of the human race therein, and thereby the increase and expansion of the angelic heavens, which is the primary and ultimate end of *divine love* operating by *divine wisdom.*

That man is born in a middle state, which constitutes an equilibrium between conjugial love and its opposite. Hence the love of the sex which is common to all animals.

That in the progressive developement of the *rational* faculty, man either favors the conjugial principle or its opposite, and makes it his own, by will and intention, if not by deed.

That in proportion as the conjugial principle is cherished in him, as the *crown and jewel* of the christian life; he prepares himself more and more for heaven, and becomes more nearly conjoined with angelic societies, among whom he is introduced after death.

That this can only be effected by intermediates, according to the *laws of divine order*, which are, to shun evils as sins, or the application

of truths to life. That if man by these means, does not recede from the love of evil, the *true conjugial principle* cannot have place with him, which is the union of the Lord and his church.

That *good and evil are opposites.* That as being opposites they have nothing in common, the former proceeding *through* heaven, the latter from hell. That with man each commences, when the other ends, proceeding from greater to less and *vice versa.* Hence the continual *endeavors* of the *divine providence* operating by the law of order, in leading man from less to greater good, and withdrawing him from greater to less evil. Hence, also, the origin of the *permission of evil.*

From these premises it may be perceived, that there are degrees of the love of good, as also degrees of the love of evil, and that these degrees are various, differing according to the quality of good and truth in every human being.

In relation to that love, into which man is born, and which as above said, constitutes an equilibrium between conjugial love and its opposite. It being a love, *appertaining to the natural man is an evil.*

That this incipient evil, with man, makes progressions from less to greater, unless in its progress it be checked by the implantation of the *spiritual conjugial principle.*

That this spiritual conjugial principle, can in no wise, be received by man, but by his having regard to *God* in his life, by which is meant a departure from evils *as sins,* and living in the love of uses.

That in proportion as man does this, he emerges from the *mere natural state,* into a *spiritual one,* whereby the superior regions of his mind are successively opened—until he comes at length to feel the *delight of good,* and perceive the *beauty of truth* in himself, as proceeding from the *union of love and wisdom* in *Him* who alone IS.

Answer to the communication of Thomas, published in No. 3, of the Herald of Truth, p. 167.

The great design of our heavenly Father in the creation of intelligent beings was the extensive diffusion of happiness. When the people of this earth, averted themselves from the Lord and became sinful, and consequently miserable, religion was introduced from above, in order to bring them back again into a state of purity, that they might again be happy. Before evil existed, man was in union with God, but after sin came into the world, that union was broken. The object of religion was to bring man back again and re-unite him to his God, and the meaning of the word is re-union. Hell, misery, and the devil which seem to be the principal ingredients of some kinds of religion,

form no part of true religion, nor have any connexion with it, but are the offspring of sin, and in the same proportion as we avoid that, we shall be delivered from them. Again, it is no part of true religion to consider any change in God as necessary, or endeavor to effect any such change. All external attempts therefore to satisfy his justice or pacify his anger, or to render him merciful and propitious, are preposterous in the extreme and worse than useless. As well might we offer prayers and sacrifices to the sun of this world to induce it to give light to the blind; nor would the latter absurdity be any greater than the former; for as the sun is continually sending forth all necessary light, but the naturally blind cannot receive it; so also every good, and every blessing is continually flowing from God to man, but the spiritually blind cannot see and receive them. And as the only rational mode of proceeding, would be to heal the eye that is naturally blind that it may be thereby prepared for the reception of natural light, so it would be equally rational that those who are spiritually blind, should have their sight restored, that they may thereby be prepared for the reception of spiritual light, or in other words that they may become capable of receiving the happiness that our heavenly Father is ever ready and desirous to bestow upon them. Sin is the cause of all misery in this world or in the world to come, not that God punishes us for sin, but that sin itself renders us miserable, and there is nothing in Heaven, earth or hell that ought to be feared but sin and its consequences. And in nothing, is the cunning of the grand adversary of man more conspicuous than in inducing the christian world to believe that the justice, or wrath of God would destroy them, and therefore that he must be satisfied or they never can be saved: for while they are vainly endeavoring to effect this imaginary change in him, they are almost sure to overlook that important change which is indispensible in themselves. All true religion consists in the removal of evil from ourselves, and the implantation and cultivation of good in its stead. And this our heavenly Father has expressly declared by his servant Isaiah: "*Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil and learn to do well.*"

FOR THE HERALD OF TRUTH.

STRICTURES ON MRS. C. M. THAYER'S PUBLIC AVOWALS.

[*It was not the wish of the Editor to admit any thing into the Herald of Truth, concerning Mrs. C. M. Thayer's dereliction of the principles of the New Church, or of her return to the Methodists. If she prefers a union with the latter, she has the same right to her choice that justly belongs to every individual. And no one ought to wish even for a moment to deprive her of that privilege. But the Editor having received*

the following strictures and finding them well calculated to remove prejudice, and to subserve the cause of truth, does not feel himself at liberty to reject them.

No. 1.

The writer of the following strictures thinks it his duty to communicate something in defence of a cause the divine verity of which is publicly called in question. The spiritual descent of the New Jerusalem, and the Lord's second advent, are objects and realities, to every genuine New Churchman, most dear and interesting. They are the cause of our Lord the lamb, and for *His sake* must be defended.

In the particular case now to be considered, the good of our fair delinquent we would gladly promote. How much to be lamented is it, that words of reproof should need be used. But "faithful are the wounds of a friend." A person who has deserted a *misnamed* cause of truth and righteousness may return to it again; but one who has receded from heavenly goods and truths, can hardly be expected ever to be renewed again to repentance. An apostle expresses himself strongly by saying, "It is impossible." Were it not for the hope of rescuing others from the contaminating influence of these "public avowals," and the requisition of justice to the interests of the Lord's new kingdom, the writer could not deem it expedient to intrude his feeble efforts

When the intelligence arrived of Mrs. Thayer's recession from the New Jerusalem, it appeared desirable, that all controversy should be avoided. It was at first apprehended, that she was too much imbued with our heavenly doctrines not to be useful wherever her lot might be cast; that at least if unmolested, she would not make use of the press to exhibit herself in opposition; and least of all, that she would suffer herself in this way to bring a public odium upon the sacred principles of the new dispensation. Did she not even give some of us to understand, that she could be a recipient of our New Church doctrines among the Methodists? And that as her residence was providentially allotted amongst them, it would be a privilege still retaining her principles, to be admitted to their communion? Does she not indeed imply this, partly, by saying to them, in one of her printed communications, "You have asked for no test of orthodoxy to warrant my frank reception?" When they were thus accommmodating we may conclude that she had no atonement to make with the Methodists, and and consequently that she was a volunteer in resorting to the press as an engine against the New Church. How, in these circumstances could she speak of "a public avowal of her cordial return as necessary?" It was unnecessary, because her frank reception was granted without any test of orthodoxy required. That all our charitable anticipations have been rendered abortive by a succession of her printed

and widely circulated productions, is an indelible fact which forebodes to her, if we mistake not, the keenest regret. Nor is it by any means certain, that she has not been emboldened by our silence and long forbearance, to proceed with increasing security in her endeavor to produce, what she has the temerity to term, "this wreck of a highly ingenius theory." Could we have supposed that standing over it as the victim of her prowess, she would call herself happy! Could she rationally expect that, in the view of her repeated and voluntary aggressions, no pen would dare wake from its slumbers? Are all we "so heartless grown," as to see without emotion and without one effort, this palladium of our safety "a wreck," in her estimation? On our parts it is freely granted, that a pacific spirit is an essential characteristic in a genuine recipient of the cause we advocate. To such a recipient all polemic speculations and feuds are unpleasant. They are viewed as a sweeping tempest, and shunned as the falses of evil, and as sins against God. Our combats can be those only of defence; and those too in the name of the Lord.

We have no apprehension, that the heavenly principles of the New Jerusalem will ever be reduced to a "wreck." We are well assured that this is impossible. "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." The danger is that those will be wrecked who treat it with contumely, and persist in it. That they may be delivered from bringing this dire disaster on themselves, and that the ways of God to those who desire to know the truth may be faithfully vindicated, we shall not shrink from the discharge of the duty which appears to have become imperative. May the Lord of his great mercy bless the undertaking.

H.

STRICTURES ON MRS. THAYER'S PUBLIC AVOWALS.

No. 2.

It was proposed above to begin with Mrs. Thayer's account of herself. The force or imbecility of her testimony, and the salutary or deleterious tendency of her example, of which she has given such extraordinary publicity, may be developed and tested by her consistent or contradictory statements concerning herself. If all is straight, then all is well as regards her sincerity. But if any thing devious and contravening shall appear—still it must be recollected, that in her unnecessary public avowals, she was a volunteer in submitting her statements to public scrutiny. This being the case, all legiti-

mate consequences she should be prepared to meet, without a breath of complaint. With the cordial concession of every tender consideration for her sex, it must be carefully premised, that when she sets herself in competition with the cause of our blessed Lord and his kingdom, no mitigation at the expense of divine truth, can be claimed or admitted: "there is in this case neither Jew nor Greek," to be regarded as such; "there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female." In this respect, that the ordeal must be inexorable, is self evident. For the Lord's sake, then, we are in the investigation, to guard ourselves with fidelity, against a misguided sympathy. The sword of truth must be suffered to pierce and divide wherever it must.

She admits that when she left the Methodists, she was actuated by "prejudice." "At the time" she says, "every thing was viewed through the distorted medium of prejudice." How do we know but that she has viewed every thing though the same distorted medium in her return to the Methodists? When she receded from them, she appears to have been influenced by "excitement." Referring to the event she says, "In the ardour of zealous excitement, it was impossible for me to perceive how much personal and local feeling entered into my views and influenced my decisions, nor is it easy for a mind much excited to discover the misapprehension on which this excitement depends." How do we know but an equal degree of excitement and misapprehension attended her retrocession from the New Jerusalem? She owns expressly, that, "it has been her fault through life to be guided too implicitly by strong and vivid feeling;" and, "that we may be under the dominion of imagination and sophistry when we deem ourselves the ardent votaries of reason and truth." Such being the contexture and characteristic feature of her life, what is more likely than that it had its full share of influence in her return to the Methodists? Is it not reasonable, that her public avowals should be accordingly appreciated?

But let us look without prejudice at her account of herself. "The first steps of my return," she says, "were dictated by feeling rather than opinion." Was it a strong and vivid excitement? According to her statement, her feeling appears to have been in favour of her return, before her opinion would justify it! She *felt* disposed to recede from the New Jerusalem, to unite again with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and took her "first steps" to effect it, while her opinion was opposed to it! She went, good woman, against the light of her understanding! She *did*, what her judgment admonished her to shun as a sin against God! She was neither true to the Lord, nor to his church, nor to herself, and she implicitly publishes these strange things to the world, that they may receive her testimony.

Did she afterward allow herself to be dictated by feeling rather than opinion? The public avowal, that in her first steps she did so, seems to imply that afterward, she permitted her understanding to be

unfettered and free to the proper discharge of its office. On any other hypothesis, it is not seen why the qualifying terms first steps should be used. But what is the fact? Did she suffer her understanding to be unshackled? Did she only in her first steps allow herself to be dictated by feeling rather than opinion? Let the answer be in her own account of herself. "Known only to my God," she says "were the deep exercises of my mind when vacillating between contending principles; and it was not until I became willing to waive all points of difference and return to the duties and engagements of the church that difficulties began to disappear. But in proportion as I have sought to live under the practical influence of christianity without reference to peculiarity of opinion, my doubts and difficulties have vanished before the sunbeams of Revelation." What could she have said more directly to show, that a proper use of her understanding was carefully avoided as a source of deep distress to her feelings? In her painful dilemma, what was the great desideratum, but to waive all points of difference, and act without reference to peculiarity of opinion, that her understanding might cease to operate, and cease to produce, in the deep exercises of her mind, the vacillating conflict? "*Until*" she adopted this expedient, the doubts and difficulties did not "*begin* to disappear." But in proportion as she waived *all* points of difference, and had no reference to peculiarity of opinion, they vanished. Her understanding being closed, the clouds were soon dispersed. Her feelings, then, rather than her opinion, dictated her return to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Her opinion was in favour of the New Jerusalem; otherwise there could be no necessity of waiving it as a troublesome intruder. It created a serious interrupting difficulty, with many a "doubtful doubt," in her anxious mind wishing to recede.—The unwelcome disturber must therefore be expelled. She must even refuse to think, and proceed by a blind impulse, or her doubts and difficulties would not begin to disappear. This seems to be the amount of her representation.

That she did not allow herself the free and unbiassed exercise of her understanding, is discoverable from several other of her statements. In her "avowal of her hearty belief in *all the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church*," she says, "It is worthy of remark, also, that my mind has not arrived to this state by any course of argument or research."—By which it appears that argument and research were deemed of no use in the course she was taking; that she went blindfold; that in her apprehension, she could be a cordial and full receiver of *all the doctrines* of Methodism, without argument or research, and consequently, that not only her first steps in her return, but all her succeeding ones were dictated by feeling rather than opinion. However this might be, it seems to have been a very singular process in her arriving to this state, and worthy of remark, that without the use of reason, research or argument, one system of doctrines with all its innumerable arguments and researches, should be discarded, and *all the*

doctrines of another heartily received. Such an anomaly can be accounted for, perhaps, if we admit the whole process was the work of a strong and vivid excitement, without the use of the rational faculty. Having waived all points of difference, and determined to act without reference to peculiarity of opinion, what except feeling could remain to preponderate? Her excitement of repulsion and attraction thus divorced and secluded from the light of intelligence, like a falling body without the power of thought, tending directly to the centre of gravitation, has led her to become "fully and heartily a Methodist."

In another place she seems to speak sarcastically of her own intellectual capacity. She mentions her "not seeking to penetrate into the arcana of invisible existence by scientific research, or to stretch my little powers to grasp what God in his wisdom has seen proper to place beyond the reach of human capacity." One would think her little powers should have been improved, rather than laid aside as redundant. To make scientific research appear absurd, she runs it into an extreme; and thus, as if the human understanding were a faculty superfluous in man, she condemns its use by her own example.

Is there nothing devious to all this in her public avowals? Is there nothing in contravention to the above statements? With compassion we would gladly extend over what follows "the elastic mantle of charity." But when duty becomes imperative, our feelings must not be suffered to dictate *one step* of disobedience to its call.

In her account of herself she says, "I have deliberated long."—Where was the time or place for her to do this, when previous to her doubts and difficulties *beginning* to disappear, she had waived *all* points of difference? About *what* could she deliberate? Without comparing "*points of difference*," with some use of her understanding, how could she deliberate? Having no reference to peculiarity of opinion, how could she deliberate? Without a course of argument and research, how could she deliberate? Is feeling separate from rationality a deliberative faculty? In her letter to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Chillicothe, she says, "It gives me sincere pleasure to be able to assure you, that *on a careful investigation* I have found most of our *differences of opinion* to have no other existence than in the ambiguity of words." How could she go into a careful investigation of differences of opinion, when her doubts and difficulties vanished only in proportion to her acting without reference to such differences? Could she decide in favor of Methodism, with careful investigation, and against the New Jerusalem, without reference to peculiarity of opinion? Could she determine the preference, and deliberate long, and investigate carefully without a consideration of the difference between the doctrines she has rejected and those she received? Again she affirms, "I have been enabled by divine grace to submit my opinions to a careful re-examination." When she had waived them "all," and had adopted a course of conduct without reference to them, how could they be the objects of her careful re-examination? She says, "no

action in my life was ever undertaken with more deliberate scrutiny." Were not her first steps comprised in the *undertaking?* And were not these directed by feeling. How then could no action in her life be *undertaken* with more deliberate scrutiny? Several other quotations might be made to the same effect. Let the reader determine, if he can, from these, whether she did or did not, go into a course of argument and research: whether she acted or did not act, with reference to peculiarity of opinion: whether she deliberated, or followed the dictates of feeling rather than opinion: whether she subjected her opinions to a careful re-examination, or waived all points of difference: whether she undertook her return with deliberate scrutiny, or had no reference to any thing which favoured either the New Church, or the Methodists. These are inquiries suggested by the above statements literally taken from her public avowals. Whether they should be answered in the affirmative or negative, or both, or neither the one nor the other, the writer does not feel himself competent to decide. The reader, however, will see with his own eyes, and think for himself. If he can form an opinion as to Mrs. Thayer's testimony concerning herself, he will probably express it. He will also store it carefully in his memory for use, when he shall be presented with the testimony relating to subjects of higher importance.

In some future number or numbers, if the Lord will, these strictures will be continued.

H.

The writer is requested to forward as soon as may be the remaining numbers, that they may be published in regular succession.—Ed.

SIN THE CAUSE OF ALL MISERY; AND THE NECESSITY OF CO-OPERATING WITH THE INFLUENCES OF THE SPIRIT IN ITS REMOVAL.

We are told by an eminent writer that order is heaven's first law, and we also have it from higher authority, that God is a God of order. The result of such divine order, it is plain to see, must be happiness, tranquility, peace. Every thing therefore that produces disorder, misery and confusion, is in opposition to heaven, contrary to the will of God, and destructive to the happiness of man. This opposition could not have originated in God, for there was nothing in him to produce it:—it could not have originated in heaven, for there was nothing *there* to produce it. It must therefore have originated in man, who was necessarily a free agent, because, on his free agency his happiness depended. His voluntary co-operation with the order of heaven, would render him happy. But his voluntary opposition to that divine

order, would render him miserable. This opposition to divine order, in the language of scripture, is called sin; and it could not have been prevented or destroyed by Almighty power, without interfering with the free agency of man, and thus destroying his capacity for happiness.

After sin came into existence it gradually increased, until it pervaded the whole earth and extended its baleful influence to all mankind. And from this fruitful source has originated all the evils and miseries of every description that we have to suffer here or hereafter. In order to comprehend how sin, which is a spiritual evil, should produce all the miseries which we experience in this natural world, it becomes necessary to remember that we are closely connected with two worlds, that is the world of matter and the world of spirit. The world of matter is of itself totally inert or dead, but the world of spirit is all life and action. No effect therefore can be produced upon matter any further than spirit puts it in motion or operates upon it. Here I think it will be easy to perceive that the effects which take place in the world of matter must correspond or partake of the nature of that spirit which produces them. If this is clearly understood, there can be no difficulty in comprehending why there could be no natural evils before sin came into existence. Because that divine order which flows from God and pervades the heavens could at that time extend to the earth and without any opposition produce its own proper effects. But after the opposing power of sin came into operation, this divine order was interrupted and broken and man became exposed to the evils and miseries which he had brought upon himself, and which may not only deprive him of happiness in this world, but of eternal happiness in the world to come. But notwithstanding the wickedness, the folly and the obstinacy of man, it has always been the desire of our heavenly father to bring him out of his miserable situation and enable him to become pure, wise and happy. But man is only man by virtue of his free agency the Lord cannot therefore force him to become holy and happy against his will. But he gives him the kindest invitations and places before him all possible inducements; yet after all, man is unthankful, obstinate and capricious. He loves to have every thing in his own way. He is willing to be happy, but he is not willing to renounce his evil affections, and he therefore tries every possible means of obtaining happiness without making so great a sacrifice. If he is naturally cheerful, he can deny himself in this respect and appear melancholy and gloomy. If he is fond of the elegancies of life, he can also deny himself and become plain and course in his dress and in his house. But he ought to know that a religion that consists in such trifles, is at best but a trifling religion. True religion performs its operations on the internal part of man, and removes all evil from his affections, and all errors from his understanding. If his affections are pure, heavenly happiness can flow into them from above, but if they are filled with evil, there is no room to receive it, and he must be incapable of happiness until that evil is removed. And that can never be done without divine assistance, and this can never be received without man's co-operation. He

must open the door and then the Lord will come in. Man is not prepared to receive the blessings and mercies of God, until he is humble enough to ask for them. The disciples, when tossed on the ocean, did did not call on the Lord to help them until they found they were unable to help themselves. And man never will call on the Lord until he has made this discovery. And this discovery is never made but through the medium of temptations, trials and troubles.

FOR THE HERALD OF TRUTH.

ON THE INTERNAL SENSE OF THE WORD.

There are many passages in the divine word, that in the literal sense we find it very difficult to reconcile with our ideas of justice, goodness or truth, and from which we can derive very little, if any instruction. In addition to those, of this description, there are others, and the number is very great, of which in the literal sense no consistent meaning has ever been given, and probably never can be. Indeed, I believe that I may venture to assert, that more than half of the bible, in the common or literal acceptation, contains no religious instruction. And yet we all profess to believe that it is from God, and its primary object is our spiritual and eternal happiness. But how can this be the case with those parts that have no meaning, or no meaning but a literal one, and that in no way connected with religious or spiritual subjects? Is it rational to suppose that our heavenly father would give us a revelation from heaven, a large portion of which would have no certain meaning, and another large portion which would relate entirely to the concerns of this world, and of course would in no way be connected with the design or object in view? And yet all this we must admit, if we have any consistency, provided we deny or reject all meaning to the divine word, but a literal one. And why should there he such mighty objections to an internal or spiritual sense? Is not God a spirit? Is it unreasonable to suppose that a revelation from him would be spiritual? Are we not spiritual beings, except the material body which we can retain at most but a few short years. And after we leave this earth, are we not to exist eternally as spiritual beings, in a spiritual world? As the soul of man cannot exist in this material world without a material body; so neither can the spirit or soul of the divine word, and the literal sense of it therefore serves as a body or covering for it, here on earth; but when we shall put off these bodies of flesh and go into the world of spirit, we shall find that there the holy word exists in its spiritual sense alone, and that it has no literal sense there as it has on earth.

We are told in many places in the sacred scriptures that the church on earth should at some future day arrive at a much higher degree of excel-

lence and perfection than it had ever before enjoyed. And when this time shall come may we not rationally expect that the people of God will enjoy much greater light and knowledge, and be blessed with much more exalted views of his character and of his holy word, than mankind were capable of receiving before? The members of the New Jesusalem believe and declare that this glorious time has commenced. They tell you that great light is come into the world, and that the Lord has revealed and laid open his holy word to man, and that all of it can now be understood. This, is certainly either true or not true, and we cannot determine which until we first understand the subject. To embrace, or reject any principle, without knowledge, is equally improper and criminal, for by so doing, we may embrace an error, or we may reject the truth. And should we give a blind assent even to the truth itself, it would be of little or no avail, because it was embraced, not from knowledge, but from prejudice, and the same prejudice would induce us to embrace an error. It is objected to the New-Jerusalem, that it is altogether different from any of the common systems of religion. This, its advocates will readily admit, but at the same time they think it a strong argument in its favour, rather than against it. For if the old dispensation had become so corrupt, that it was necessary that the Lord should raise up a new one, we should certainly expect the new one to be very different from the former, or why should it be raised up.

It is also objected to the new dispensation, that it requires too much thinking, too much examination and reflection. But this, instead of being considered as an objection, ought to be received as a high recommendation. Can it be supposed, that a system of religion, which has been sent down to earth by an infinite God, can be fully comprehended by frail and ignorant man, and that too, without hardly exercising a thought upon it? Would it not be more rational to suppose, that a religion from above, would afford constant exercise for the faculties and powers of our minds, not only while on earth, but eternally in the heavens? The man who thinks but little, can at best enjoy but little happiness. His stupidity may indeed preserve him from pain, but can yield him no pleasure.

It is generally admitted, by all denominations, that here and there in the bible may be found a passage that has some spiritual meaning, but what that spiritual meaning may be, is left altogether to conjecture, and is generally as various as the feelings of those who undertake to explain it. Other places again, they find, which by general consent, they admit to have some hidden meaning, but yet never can give any distinct or definite idea of it.

If to these difficulties, we add a great portion of the word, from which they can obtain no instruction, and to which they can find no satisfactory meaning, either literal or spiritual; we should very naturally conclude, that they would rejoice to hear, that the Lord in mercy to mankind had revealed a way by which they might be able to

understand and comprehend the whole of his divine word. That now there was an unerring rule given, by which its sacred mysteries might be unlocked, and laid open for the advantage of all who were desirous to be benefitted thereby. But no, to our astonishment, this information is received with no satisfaction. We are generally told that they understand enough of the divine word, or that the Lord never intended that all of it should be understood. But according to the first of these objections, it would follow, that the Lord has made his revelation much more extensive than there was any need of, and according to the second objection, it would follow, that it was no real revelation, for He never intended it should be understood.

But it ought to be considered a great recommendation to the internal sense of the word, according to the New-Jerusalem, that it relates entirely to spiritual subjects, and is full of heavenly instruction.

THE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION.

To suppose that we can be truly religious, and yet have no regard for the good or prosperity of our neighbour, nor any desire to promote his interest or happiness, is an absurdity that cannot be too often or too much exposed. For religion is of no avail any further than it becomes actively useful. And its good effects must extend to all around us in proportion to our ability and their state of reception.

But our endeavours to promote the good of our neighbour must not be confined to the things of this world. We must not only consider the welfare of his body, but of his soul; not only his prosperity in time, but in eternity—not only his happiness on earth, but in heaven. If therefore, we duly weigh these things in our minds, we shall find that we have much to do, and that we have no time to waste in idleness or to spend upon trifles.

It is a dangerous error that many imbibe, that in order to be religious they must overlook their worldly concerns, neglect their earthly duties, separate themselves from amongst their fellow creatures, consider them as beneath their notice, and endeavour to rise entirely above the world and confine their religion to themselves and their God, believing that they are doing much for him, and that they shall thereby, above others, gain his favour. But such people ought to know that in this way they can do nothing for God. He is far beyond their reach, perfectly happy in himself, and needs none of their asssistance. Transcendently exalted above all principalities and powers, infinite and independent; he only requires that we should extend our powers of usefulness to each other. He wishes us all to be happy and so great is his mercy and loving kindness, that every benefit we do to a fellow creature, he considers as done to himself, and rewards us accordingly.

In Matthew xxv. from 34 to 40 inclusive, our blessed Lord has pointed out the qualifications which are necessary in order to gain us an admission into heaven. And were our affections in that pure and holy state which they ought to be, these requisitions would appear few, plain, easy, and delightful. He does not say to the righteous, inasmuch as ye have belonged to this or that denomination, and have travelled over the whole world to gain proselytes—have denied yourselves the comforts and pleasures of life—have always been gloomy and unhappy—have expended all your property in building churches—have always shown the greatest hatred towards the wicked—and as far as your power extended, have persecuted even unto death, all who differed from you in sentiment. He does not say, in as much as ye have done all these things, enter into the kingdom prepared for you. No, but in very different language he addresses them; I was an hungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: in prison and ye came unto me. But these faithful servants of the Lord having never seen him in this needy and distressing situation, did not know that they had ever done any thing that he would consider as a favour extended to himself.—They had, indeed, among their fellow creatures, found abundant exercise for their benevolent affections; they had performed these good works, from the love of doing good, and from a wish to promote the happiness of their neighbour, and they had not been influenced by the hope of reward. But our heavenly father replied, that inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

From this we learn, that true religion does not consist in giving our assent to any particular creed; or in conforming to any external mode of worship—or in assuming any solemn or sanctimonious appearance; but that it consists in the constant exercise of our purified affections, and in our endeavours to promote the good of all as far as our ability extends.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.

There is, perhaps, no one subject on which the ideas of mankind are more vague, more trifling, or more inconsistent, than on the happiness of heaven. It may be proper to make a few observations on this subject, in order to show the fallacy of common opinions. It is believed by some, if they can only be admitted within the gates of heaven, that their happines would be certain and complete. But it is a fact, that all may be admitted within the gates of heaven, if they choose, and there is nothing out of themselves that will prevent any of them from entering and remaining there in the full enjoyment of

perfect happiness. But they ought to know, that the happiness of heaven consists in the active operation of the principles of heaven upon their hearts and lives, and if they do not love those pure and holy principles, how can they either receive them, or be rendered happy by them? If love thy neighbour as thyself, should be the great leading principle or law of heaven, how can it yield any happiness to those who disregard or despise all but themselves, who turn a deaf ear to the afflicted, and treat with contempt the poor and the needy. Can it afford such persons any satisfaction after they leave this world, to behold those whom they despised, enjoying equal or greater happiness than themselves? Can those who believe the lower orders of people as merely formed for tools or instruments to promote the aggrandizement of the rich and great, rejoice to see them as happy, or happier than themselves? Can those who have hundreds of slaves at their controul and consider them as little better than brutes, and buy and sell them as cattle in this world, be willing to share an equality with them in the world to come? It must be plain to every reflecting mind that such people must experience a very great change in their feelings and principles before they can answer these questions in the affirmative. We have a strong example of the selfishness of human nature recorded in the history of one of the queens of England, who lived a little more than a century ago. When lying on her death bed, she began to turn her attention to futurity, and sent for the celebrated Dr. Samuel Clark, a very pious and learned divine. She made many inquiries about heaven and the happiness of its inhabitants. "Shall I," said she, "be looked up to as a queen? Shall I be respected for my royalty? Will all be my slaves and servants there as they are here? "O, no," replied the doctor; "they have in heaven none of these earthly distinctions; there, their happiness and the estimation in which they are held, are in proportion to their virtue and their goodness." "If that is all you can tell me," replied the queen, "you may go as soon as you please, for I have no desire to have any thing to do with such a heaven." And no doubt among our prominent and violent professors of this day, were they to speak their minds as freely as she did, but their real sentiments would be much the same. Indeed, so loose, and so desultory are the ideas of most professors, concerning heaven, or heavenly happiness, that it is truly astonishing that they are not more anxious to obtain some certain and correct information. It is the general opinion that our material bodies are hereafter to be raised, and yet it is not believed that we are hereafter to exist in the human form, or indeed, in any form at all. And yet they will say that they believe they shall spend an eternity in singing, and praying, and worshipping God. But if they have no form, how can they do this? if they have no form, they can have no mouth or tongue, and if they have not these, they can have no voice, and if they have no voice, they cannot sing, nor utter forth anthems of praise. And if they have no form, they cannot lift up their hands in praise and prayer to the throne of mercy, because they will have no hands. They cannot bow the knee

for they will have no knees. They cannot behold the beauties of heaven, for they will have no eyes. They cannot hear the music of heaven, for they will have no ears. The saints cannot associate or know any thing of each other's happiness, for there will be no sense—no form, as mediums of communication. But if those who advance this shapeless system, would only carefully examine this subject, they would soon find, that it would annihilate the human race, and deprive heaven of every inhabitant. We should remember that without form and without substance, there can be no existence—no identity—no separate and distinct beings. But we should also remember, that there are two kinds of form and substance, the material and the spiritual. Those which are material, we can see and feel with our material organs in this material world; and those which are spiritual, we shall be able to see and feel still more distinctly in the spiritual world.—I say more distinctly, because our mode of existence will be much higher and more perfect in the spiritual world than it possibly can be in this material world. It will be as much superiour as spirit is to matter, or as our souls are to our bodies. Our spirits in this world, are like gold in the ore, buried in the earth, and covered and mixed with dirt and rubbish; but in the spiritual world they may be like gold after it is taken from the mine, cleansed from all its impurities and rendered clear and bright. But shall we say that pure gold has no form or substance because it is stripped of the earth and the rubbish that formerly surrounded it? And yet, this is not so absurd as to deny form or substance to the soul, because it is stripped of the material body, for the soul of man is a substance infinitely superior to the finest gold. And to assert that the soul is incapable of happiness until the resurrection and re-union of the material body, is a thousand times more absurd than to say the finest gold is of no value until it shall be re-united to the filth and dirt from whence it was taken.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE NATURAL STATE OF THE MIND, AND THE NATURAL STATE OF THE EARTH.

There is a strong correspondence betweeen the natural man and the natural state of the earth. The earth in its natural state, produces briars, thorns and brambles, and trees of various kinds that yield no cultivated fruits. It is, also, a habitation for wild beasts, unclean birds, and venomous reptiles. So it is with the natural man, he is full of evil affections, destructive concupiscences and worldly maxims. He has, indeed, certain thoughts and knowledges, but they all relate to mere natural and sensual things, and are of no use to the everlasting concerns of the soul: There are, also, in the natural man, such violent lusts and raging passions, as correspond to the bear, the wolf, and all the savage beasts of the wilderness. However wise, or great, or learned, refined, or good, a man may pretend to be, yet if he shuns civilized society, and takes up his abode amongst the howling beasts of the desert, he will most certainly be destroyed by them. So if a man pretends to be ever so pious, holy, religious and good, yet, if he does not cultivate that purity, innocence and excellence, which christianity requires, but rests satisfied with the external religion, and earthly affections and knowledges of the natural man, he will find that as the former was destroyed as to his bodily life, by the ravenous beasts of the wilderness, so he will also be destroyed as to his spiritual life, by the corresponding evils and vices which originated in the depravity of his nature. Thus, we are enabled to see, that as evil beasts can destroy natural life, so evil affections can destroy spiritual life. And it is this latter kind which we have the most reason to fear. The others may destroy the body, but these can destroy the soul. To natural bears and beasts but a small portion of mankind are ever exposed; but to evil affections and wicked lusts, which may be considered as spiritual bears and beasts, we are all exposed, and if we do not carefully guard against them, they will destroy us all.